[Carta a Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar]

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA · THE SENATE

GORDON D McINTOSH
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT OFFICES
ST MARTIN'S CENTRE
44 ST GEORGE'S TERRACE
PERTH, W.A. 6000
(G.P.O. BOX 858, PERTH, W.A. 6001)
TELEPHONE 3254116

11th February, 1985

United Nations Secretary General
Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar

Dear Secretary General,

I regret that I am unable to meet with you personally in Canberra this week. May I take this opportunity to raise with you my concerns on the East Timor issue.

I have visited East Timor both before the Indonesian invasion in 1975 and as a member of an Australian parliamentary delegation in August 1983. I am Chairman of the Australian Senate's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee which in 1982 conducted an inquiry into the human rights and conditions of the people of East Timor.

I am sure you are aware of the tragic proportions of the war in East Timor which is now in its tenth year. Invasion, massive population dislocation and then famine during 1975-79 resulted in at least 100,000 deaths and sundered the social fabric as well as the fragile subsistence economy of this small, poor neighbour of ours.

Indonesian government economic programmes in Timor since 1980 have muted some international concern for the annexation but have done little to persuade the East Timorese to quietly accept integration. A climate of fear and distrust remains in East Timor, punctuated by major Indonesian security operations - the most recent beginning in August 1983 and, as of late 1984 was continuing in some areas.

Successive UNGA resolutions, defending the inalienable right of the East Timorese to self-determination have, regrettably, done little to help the Timorese. So it was with some hope that people like myself welcomed the 1982 Resolution giving you a mandate to actively consult with "all parties concerned".

Similarly I welcome the fact that there have been consultations since that time, but I am concerned at the apparent direction of reported diplomatic activity.

I was dismayed to hear a BBC news report on 8 February 1985 claiming you said at the end of your Jakarta visit that "the problem (of East Timor) might not arise" at the UN this year.

/2

CIDAC 00275
Centro de Documentação

TL 3163

-5. APR. 1995

I was even more dismayed to note that in your detailed report to the United Nations last year on the series of consultation that had occurred, there was not one reference to consultation with East Timorese or any note on the absence of such consultations.

This, I believe, is the crucial issue in any process aimed at a solution of the Timor problem.

While Portugal is in current UN terms, the administering authority over Timor, there is no practical way the Portuguese government can claim to be able to represent the views of the East Timorese. Given the nature of the relationship between Indonesia and the East Timorese - essentially a state of war - Jakarta cannot represent the views of the Timorese.

Any arrangement which does not actively involve consultation with the East Timorese cannot lead to a just solution on the ground in Timor.

There can be no workable solution unless the East Timorese, including Fretilin, are fundamentally involved in the diplomatic processes.

I hope you are able to assure me, and more particularly the East Timorese, that the current round of consultations are not leading to a "solution" which solves the "problem" for Portugal and Indonesia but not for the Timorese.

Such a solution would only demean the United Nations and the principles of its Charter.

I, and I am sure many other Australians, wish you well in this very difficult task.

Yours sincerely,

GORDON D. McINTOSH

SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA